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TAGS: PREL PTER IZ TU
SUBJECT: PKK DEFECTORS CLAIM US SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZATION

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (s) Turkish MFA U/S Apakan convoked Ambassador July 7 to convey information on allegations of US support for the PKK made by PKK figures who surrendered to Turkish authorities June 29 in Sirnak (near the border with northern Iraq). Apakan noted the press reporting on the surrender and on the allegations about the US which were leaked anonymously to the press in the days that followed. He also noted Ambassador's public remarks denying US support to or links of any kind with the PKK, which were widely publicized in Turkey on July 2-3.

¶2. (s) Apakan said that FM Gul had asked for detail on the allegations. Following his June 6 conversation with Secretary Rice, Gul had asked that Apakan brief the

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Ambassador. According to information Apakan had received, the three individuals revealed their information & of their free will and without pressure.⁸ They alleged that a while ago, three camouflage-painted US armored cars arrived at the PKK base on Qandil mountain. Americans got out of the cars, spoke to PKK leader Murat Karayilan, left behind three boxes of M-16s, and departed.⁸ Apakan said it was not clear to him whether the Americans were alleged to be servicemen or not. Apakan stated that the Turkish MFA does not attach credibility to this report. He said Turkey will welcome any information on this that the USG may be able to develop.

¶3. (s) Ambassador noted that he already denied the USG is providing weapons to the PKK because we are not. The reference to Karayilan was further confirmation that this is a specious allegation. US personnel do not meet with him. Ambassador noted that the very vague allegations by the PKK defectors give us nothing useful to trace back with US authorities who operate in northern Iraq. There are, moreover, many such allegations that are easy to make, unprovable, but also nearly impossible to disprove. He said the likely motive of the defectors was either to win better treatment from Turkish authorities or to sow further discord between Turkey and the US. While he would report back the information that Gul wanted passed on, Ambassador urged that it not be taken seriously.

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